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# NURSING IN MISSION STATIONS

## THE HUMAN SIDE OF NURSING AS A PROFESSION

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Nursing, to the general public, is caring for the sick. Nursing as a profession, and nursing, to the professional world, is far more than simply "taking care" of the sick, it is an intelligent study of human beings under adverse conditions; it is faithful, intelligent, obedient, humble service to unfortunate, ignorant fellow beings, men, women, and children, rich and poor. It is a truly Christian work, based on the fundamentals of Christian religion. It is work in which our Lord's words, "Unto the least of these" and "Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden," can be fully realized. Nursing is one of the highest callings in life. It is one life working for another. It is more, however, than one piece of well-oiled human machinery working to repair a broken-down skeleton. It is the call of the more fortunate being to help his less fortunate brother by unselfish, never-tiring service. It requires men and women who are willing to give their life, service, and labor willingly and cheerfully, at all times, to their less fortunate brothers who have become so neglectful of nature's laws, that at last they have fallen by the way and need a good Samaritan's hand to lift them up, to point out God's pure sunlight and invigorating fresh air, to show the road to better judgment and wiser discrimination.

The fundamentals of all nursing are first that the nurse herself be a Christian. She must be clean in mind and body, in thoughts and habits, truthful, obedient, conscientious, and humble in all walks of life, else how can she supply the brother or sister who may lack one or more of these qualities? A cheerful, and willing attitude is not only necessary but essential. A smile is to the sick person what sunshine is to the rainy day. It changes the whole perspective. It gives color to the picture of life, it is the human lamp in the dark corner of existence.

Prompt, intelligent attention to all wants and complaints is absolutely necessary. It is natural in this hurried present-day world for well, strong individuals to be impatient. How much more impatient, how justly so the individual who must lie in bed and wait for a cold

drink of water when his lips are parched and his limbs too weak to carry him!

Gentleness with seemingly unnecessary demands is also worth considering. One comes in contact in the nursing world with all classes of people. Never mind if the old man does need a bath, never mind if he does storm and fume and declare that he has never had one and is not going to have one now. One difficulty is enough at a time for him. Do not sputter and refuse to give him his medicine, because he objects to being clean. Perhaps he is clean inside, white as any lily, and I have known cases where baths have been given after dozens of refusals and the happy recipient has been known to declare he never felt better in his whole life. How has this been accomplished? By patience and gentle persistence. Do not be cross with the young lady because she must have her special hand lotion, special face powder, particular lingerie on a particular day. She is as used to these additions to life as you are perhaps to cold water and Castile soap. I have found so many times the secret of keeping a patient well is in keeping him happy, and one accustomed to little luxuries in life is unhappy in a hospital unless these little seemingly unnecessary demands are gratified. It is another incident of the case which is not a cure until mind and body are at peace.

The doctor wishes his patient to go to the hospital whenever possible, because he argues that at the hospital better rest may be obtained. Is any rest complete without peace in mind and body? Then how can any success come to our work as long as we are willing to abide by routine and hurried present day systems that oblige us to rush so heedlessly at our work that the small six-year old boy shrinks with pure fear from the hurried doctor and brisk nurse and cries, "Don't stick me again, doctor, please." The pin prick treatment that should be not even a memory becomes a dreadful nightmare.

Why do we have patients of whom we say that they never do well in a hospital? Simply because we all are so hurried and at such a high tension we forget we are dealing with our fellow men. Can we not make the profession bigger, better and more acceptable in His sight, if we stop and think, every little while, that we, too, are people, and not machines? Therefore how much greater our responsibility to each other.

Each one of us can at least be like Abou ben Adhem who, when he found his name had not been written by the angel in the book of gold, exclaimed, "Write me as one who loves his fellow men."